

Back issues of this publication  
are available on our website:  
[cdhd.idaho.gov](http://cdhd.idaho.gov)

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- The Year in Listeria—  
Product Recalls Due to  
Contamination
- Date Marking Ready-  
to-eat Food
- Monitoring Cold  
Temperatures
- Teach Food Safety  
by Example
- CDH Temperature  
Monitoring Log
- When to Report the  
Illness of a Food Service  
Employee
- Operational Plan Review

### We're A Tobacco Free Zone



To protect the health of **everyone** at  
CDHD, no smoking or other tobacco  
use is permitted in our facilities or on  
our property, both indoors and out.  
**Thank you for your cooperation.**



## The Year in Listeria— Product Recalls Due to Contamination



### Cantaloupe

The recall of cantaloupe from Jensen Farms in Colorado began in September. This was the first documented Listeriosis outbreak associated with whole uncut cantaloupe in the United States. The outbreak eventually involved 28 states. Though 43,000 pounds of cantaloupe were shipped to eastern Idaho there were no illnesses reported in the state.

Nationwide, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) received reports of 146 people infected with any one of the four outbreak-associated strains of *Listeria monocytogenes*. One-hundred-forty-two people were hospitalized. Most of those who got ill were over 60 years old. One pregnant woman miscarried, and 30 deaths were reported.

According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the most likely factors that contributed to this outbreak were:

- There could have been low level sporadic *Listeria monocytogenes* in the fields where the cantaloupe were grown, which could have been introduced into the packing facility.
- A truck used to haul culled cantaloupe to a cattle operation was parked adjacent to the packing facility and could have introduced contamination into the facility.

### Spread:

- The packing facility's design allowed water to pool on the floor near equipment and employee walkways
- The packing facility floor was difficult to clean
- The packing equipment was not easily cleaned and sanitized; washing and drying equipment used for cantaloupe packing was previously used for post-harvest handling of another raw agricultural commodity

### Growth:

- There was no pre-cooling step to remove field heat from the cantaloupes before cold storage. As the cantaloupes cooled there may have been condensation that promoted the growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*.

*Listeria* can be brought into your establishment on the food you purchase from approved sources. Washing your fruits and vegetables is an important process in your effort to serve safe food. Cantaloupe should be scrubbed and washed with clean hands and clean water prior to cutting. Once that cantaloupe is cut, refrigerate at 41°F or below.

*Continued on page 2*

*Food Review is sent biannually, free of charge to all licensed food establishments in our health district. We hope to include news of interest and importance. Topic ideas or articles written by the readers are welcome to be sent to: Editor, Food Review, CDHD, 707 N. Armstrong Pl., Boise, ID 83704. Extra copies of the newsletter are available at your local Health Department office.*

## Ada and Boise County

707 N. Armstrong Pl.  
Boise, ID 83704-0825  
Tel. (208) 327-7499  
Fax (208) 327-8553

### Rob Howarth

Environmental Health Director  
rhowarth@cdhd.idaho.gov

### Tom Schmalz - Supervisor

Facility Based Programs  
tschmalz@cdhd.idaho.gov

### Jerry Davis

jdavis@cdhd.idaho.gov

### Bud Fulleton

bfulleto@cdhd.idaho.gov

### Tammie McCarter

TMcCarte@cdhd.idaho.gov

### Frank Isenberg

fisenber@cdhd.idaho.gov

### Deb Carney

dcarney@cdhd.idaho.gov

### Chad Waters

CWaters@cdhd.idaho.gov

## Boise County

### Tyler Fortuna

tfortuna@cdhd.idaho.gov

## Elmore County

520 E. 8th North  
Mtn. Home, ID 83647  
Tel. (208) 587-4407  
Fax (208) 587-3521

### Marty Jones

mjones@cdhd.idaho.gov

## Valley County

703 N. 1st,  
McCall, ID 83638  
Tel. (208) 634-7194  
Fax (208) 634-2174

### Josh Kriz

jkriz@cdhd.idaho.gov

# Year in Listeria Continued from page 1

## Chopped Lettuce

In September *Listeria* bacteria was a potential contaminant on True Leaf Farms chopped or shredded Romaine lettuce that resulted in a recall of 2,498 cartons. This product was delivered to stores in Idaho and suppliers were notified. No cases of illness were reported. Always refrigerate cut leafy greens promptly.

## Deli Meats

In May 16,000 pounds of ready-to-eat deli meat products had the potential of being contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*. Rose & Shore Meat Company initiated the recall. The products were sent to Arizona, Nevada, California, Washington and Oregon. The problem was discovered after the company tested product at the request of a commercial customer who received a consumer complaint.

## At-Risk Populations

*Listeria* primarily affects older adults, persons with weakened immune systems, young children, pregnant women, and newborns. People can develop listeriosis up to two months after eating contaminated food. Healthy individuals may suffer only short term symptoms, such as high fever, severe headache, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. And, as evidenced by the cantaloupe outbreak, *Listeria* can cause miscarriages and stillborn deaths.



# Date Marking Ready-To-Eat Food

*Listeria monocytogenes* (LM) is just one of the nasty culprits that make date marking extremely important. *Listeria monocytogenes*, we'll just call it "LM," is typically found in soft cheeses, lunchmeats and hot dogs, however it is everywhere in our environment and very difficult to eliminate. LM has been associated with outbreaks in cantaloupe, raw milk, ice cream, raw meats, and ready-to-eat meat and cheese products.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), listeriosis, the illness caused by LM, affects 2500 people in the U.S. each year. About 500 of those cases result in death. Overall, *Listeria* has a fatality rate of 20%. This bacteria is mainly transmitted to humans through food.

## Bacteria that Grow Even in the Cold

Bacteria grow and multiply on food the longer they are in the refrigerator. Cold temperature slows, but doesn't stop, the rate of growth. Date marking requirements with time and temperature limits are designed to prevent the growth of cold growing bacteria. LM grows best 86-100°F, but growth has been recorded at 37°F and as high as 104°F.

*Continued on page 3*





## Teach Food Safety by Example

It should be no surprise to anyone that food service employees learn best by the example set by the Person In Charge (PIC). This is especially true when it comes to food safety practices.

Here are some examples of typical practices the PIC can demonstrate to his or her workers:

- Serve safe, contamination-free food
- Wash hands frequently and correctly
- Demonstrate the four-step process of cleaning kitchenware and utensils
- Use sanitizer test strips every day
- Positively reinforce safe food handling techniques
- Do not touch food with bare hands
- Monitor safe food product temperatures
- Practice efficient date marking
- Promptly refrigerate meats, poultry, dairy and egg products when delivered
- Rapidly cool potentially hazardous food

Do you lead by example in your kitchen? Is your teaching example effective?

*Continued on page 5*

## Date Marking

*Continued from page 2*

### Ready-to-Eat, Potentially Hazardous Foods

According to the Idaho Food Code (Section 3-501.17), if these foods are prepared in a food establishment and are to be held for more than 24 hours in a refrigerator, they must be date marked at the time of preparation with the date the food must be consumed or discarded.

If these foods are prepared commercially, date mark the original container when the package is opened, indicating the date the food must either be consumed or discarded. The food must be refrigerated at 41°F or below for no more than seven days.

### Actively Manage Food

The Food Code is your friend. Following its guidance will reduce the risk to your customers. Practice first in-first out stock rotation.

Properly mark the dates on ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods. Doing so limits bacteria growth and reduces the risk of serving customers food that may be out of time and temperature requirements. That's something we can all live with.

#### Foods at risk of *Listeria monocytogenes* contamination:

- deli meats
- soft cheese
- deli salads
- frankfurters
- pasteurized mild cheese
- mold-ripened cheese



## Monitoring Cold Temperatures

One of the most frequent violations we encounter when doing food establishment inspections is Improper Cold Holding. We recommend maintaining the air temperature in your refrigeration units at 38°F to ensure safe food temperatures. But air temperature and food temperature are not the same.

Maintaining food at safe temperatures requires more than simply relying on the refrigeration unit's thermostat. The fans that circulate air inside the refrigerator must be in good working order to eliminate hot spots. To truly understand if food is being kept out of the Danger Zone (between 41 & 135°F) spot check the food products themselves and see how temperatures compare to the interior air temperature. Performing these tests on a regular basis is part of actively managing food safety to prevent foodborne illness.

Foods that require proper cold holding include: deli meats, soup, gravy, cut leafy

greens and potato salad. You'll want to keep close track of the temperatures of these foods to keep them out of the danger zone and keep your customers from getting sick. We've included a temperature monitoring log sheet on the next page for your convenience.

### More about Cut Leafy Greens and Cold Holding

Science has shown that leafy greens are a medium that readily supports the growth of harmful bacteria when they are held outside proper temperature control, and after the fluids and nutrients are exposed by cutting the leaf. Cutting or shredding changes the physical properties and biochemical processes of the leaf and provides opportunities for microbial invasion of the tissue. Studies show that E. coli O157:H7 can attach to the cut edges of the leaf. Keep that in mind when preparing salads that aren't going to be consumed immediately.

**CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT - Temperature Monitoring Log**

**PHONE#**

[illegible][illegible]

**Printed Name**

Date

**Printed Name**

Date

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Not Approved \_\_\_\_\_



## Food Safety Classes

*Continued from page 3*

### Idaho Food Safety and Sanitation Course

Classes held at CDHD  
707 N. Armstrong Place, Boise  
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Cost \$33.  
Call 327-7499 to register.

- January 17
- February 14
- March 20
- April 19
- May 15
- June 19

### ServSafe® Certification Course

Classes held at CDHD  
707 N. Armstrong Place, Boise  
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Cost \$100, includes lunch.  
Call 327-7499 to register.

- January 18
- February 22
- March 22
- April 18
- May 23
- June 20



### University of Idaho Food Safety Workshop Series 2012

#### Introduction to Food Safety & HACCP Workshop

- March 6 - Caldwell, ID

Information: [www.uidaho.edu/blogs.com/foodsafety](http://www.uidaho.edu/blogs.com/foodsafety) or  
[www.fda.gov/fsma](http://www.fda.gov/fsma)

Registration 364-6188  
or [paulap@uidaho.edu](mailto:paulap@uidaho.edu)

## When to Report the Illness of a Food Service Employee

We'd like to congratulate food service operators for keeping the Health District informed when they have illness situations reported by customers or employees. Early intervention is the key to limiting outbreaks. Delayed reporting or interventions can allow the outbreak to spread and result in sick customers and adverse publicity. Below are some frequently asked illness-related questions.

### Q. Do I have to report employee illnesses to the Health District?

**A. Yes.** If an employee has certain, diagnosed illnesses or conditions in a communicable form, including diarrhea or vomiting, the person in charge of the eating or drinking establishment (or school or child care) must immediately notify the Health District and obtain guidance on proper actions needed to protect the public. The ill employee shall not work as a food handler as long as the disease is in a communicable stage.

The diseases and conditions include, but are not limited to:

- Campylobacteriosis
- Diarrhea
- E. coli O157:H7
- Norovirus
- Hepatitis A
- Skin infections
- Vomiting

### Q. During an outbreak investigation, do employees have to submit a stool (or other) specimen or submit to an examination?

**A. Yes,** if the investigator has reasonable cause to believe the food handler is afflicted with a disease listed the *Rules and Regulations Governing Idaho Reportable Diseases*.

More diseases are listed on this website:  
<http://adm.idaho.gov/adminrules/rules/idapa16/0210.pdf>

### Q. Will the employee be restricted from working?

**A. Maybe.** Depending on the illness, the employee may be allowed to return to work when feeling well, or may be required to submit further specimens for testing. Each disease has its own restriction protocol.





## Central District Health Department

Environmental Health  
707 N. Armstrong Pl.  
Boise, ID 83704-0825

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 1  
BOISE, ID

# Operational Plan Review

The Central District Health Department has developed a tool designed to promote safe food handling practices at food establishments. The “Food Safety Operational Plan Review” form will help you think through your food handling practices and evaluate your methods to assure food safety. This form is on our web site at this link; <http://cdhd.idaho.gov/EH/food/forms.htm>

**The operational plan review form is divided into sections that address specific risk factors:**

- employee training
- employee illness
- food preparation
- hand washing
- proper handling of ready-to-eat food
- proper thawing
- cooking temperatures
- reheating
- cold and hot holding
- date marking
- rapid cooling
- food thermometers
- cleaning and sanitizing
- bacteria and virus kill temperatures

The form is designed to be completed by the kitchen or food safety manager. It is not a complicated form if you address one section at a time and have your most knowledgeable people answer the questions. It can be also be an excellent training tool for managers to use with employees when it is thoughtfully completed.

